



State of Connecticut

SENATE

STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

SENATOR TONI BOUCHER
TWENTY-SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 3701
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591
CAPITOL: (860) 240-0465
TOLL FREE: (800) 842-1421
FAX: (860) 240-0036
E-mail: Toni.Boucher@cga.ct.gov

DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER

RANKING MEMBER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

February 23, 2011

Testimony of Senator Toni Boucher

Chairman Fleischmann, Chairman Stillman, Ranking Member Giuliano, and other distinguished Members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on *SB 930 An Act Concerning The School Entrance Age*, and *HB 6318, An Act Concerning Donations Of Equipment To The Regional Vocational-Technical School System*.

Currently, Connecticut is one of only a few states that allow parents to enroll their a four year old child in kindergarten as long the child turns five years old by January 1st. This policy has led to significant age differences among students which are detrimental to classroom performance. Children as young as four routinely share classrooms and instructional time with children as old as six or seven. The speed at which young children develop physically and mentally creates imbalances within kindergarten classes, making it more difficult for teachers to focus their lesson plans in ways that benefit the entire class and more difficult for students to get along with their peers. Consequently, parents may enroll their son or daughter in elementary school at age four only to find that the child is not ready for the class work and has difficulty fitting in on the playground with older children.

By passing this bill we would be bringing Connecticut in line with the overwhelming majority of states that have chosen to move their cutoff dates to earlier in the year. Moving the kindergarten cutoff date to October 1st would ease the transition from preschool to elementary school by reducing age differences among school children and allowing teachers to better plan their lessons. Classroom performance would improve, and fewer children would be held back in their first year of school.

HB 6318 would indemnify any person who donates equipment to regional vocational-technical schools. Equipment donated from businesses and individuals is vital for giving students hands on experience in their trades. Due to funding shortages, vocational-technical schools need to reach out for donations more than ever. However, businesses will be unwilling to make these donations if there is the potential that they will be held legally liable for them. This would be a detriment to students who depend on this equipment to prepare them for their future careers. HB 6318 would provide more incentive for companies to support our technical schools by donating their equipment.

I hope that the Education Committee will give its unanimous support to these bills. I thank you all for your careful consideration of this matter.

SERVING: BETHEL, NEW CANAAN, REDDING, RIDGEFIELD, WESTON, WESTPORT, WILTON